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**A GUIDE  
TO  
NATURAL BEAUTY**

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## FOREWORD

THE WISEST POETS have not succeeded in defining beauty, but many have recorded man's yearning for it. Some regard it as essential as food. "If you have a loaf of bread," one has phrased it, "sell half and buy hyacinths."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is interested in flowers as well as wheat. The USDA shares with other Departments and agencies of the Federal Government a continuing concern for the preservation and enhancement of our Nation's natural beauty. Since the late 1930's, the conservation of land, water, and forests has been among the major responsibilities delegated to the Department by Congress. The USDA has long pursued the twin goals of beauty and use in its management of our National Forests and its assistance to State and private forest owners. Agricultural research has uncovered secrets of plants, soils, and seeds that can be used to serve beauty's cause. The USDA has helped to extend new knowledge and skills to millions of people. The forward-looking, forward-working stance of the Department is symbolized by its hallmark, Agriculture/2000.

People, by their actions, can make the world more beautiful. The USDA directs its services to the farmers who produce our food and fiber and to all others who labor to improve the quality of our environment. Its services range from a collaboration with 2½ million 4-H Club youth engaged in agriculture and conservation projects to technical and financial assistance for soil and water conservation measures on farms, in suburbia, and regions of the countryside.

President Johnson designated 1967 as Youth for Natural Beauty and Conservation Year. In his proclamation the President said, "I ask young people—individually, and through their clubs and school groups and other organizations—to observe, to plan, and to act to preserve and protect, salvage and restore, develop and enhance the quality of their surroundings."

This booklet was designed to suggest some ways that you and others in your community can help to build a more beautiful America—and some USDA services that will help you.

## YOUR HOME

Like a flower, beauty begins in processes of growth still secret from human eyes. But we know what seems beautiful to us, and even though that also changes, the beauty of a well-kept home is commonly recognized.

Outwardly, most people begin to search and work for beauty in their immediate, personal surroundings. Beauty can be made to bloom on a tiny plot of land or none. Beauty in its essence is abstract, but this small guide to natural beauty must begin with land—with soil, at least, for that is something anyone can get his hands into.

Let's say you've overheard someone refer to your residence as "that rather barren-looking place in the middle

*Whether the home is modest or lavish, proper plantings make it beautiful. Someone lives here who has given himself, his family and others heart-lifting beauty. Agricultural research helped.*







*No home can be more beautiful than its surroundings. The James Sharps of Arlington, Virginia, began this natural loveliness with 22 azalea plantings given to them by a friend some 20 years ago. Through other acquisitions and their own propagation, they now have 2,500 azaleas and 200 rhododendrons around their home. Among the 80 or more varieties of azaleas is the Glenn Dale, developed by Agricultural Research Service horticulturists.*



*There's no question about it—you can have a little bit of heaven in your own backyard. But somebody has to work!*



*USDA agricultural explorers search for ornamentals as well as new crop plants that can be grown in the United States. Here Dr. John Creech is examining the brilliant Rhododendron japonicum growing wild in northern Japan.*

of the block." This is especially hard to bear if you live next to a Mr. Greenthumb whose yard is a neighborhood showplace. You've decided to beautify your yard and you want lasting beauty, not too hard to maintain.

How do you go about getting it?

A beautiful home landscape depends upon know-how, individual judgment, and taste. Growing conditions vary widely across the United States, so only the broadest, most general landscaping hints can be offered here.

Your best starting point may be to ask Mr. Greenthumb how he achieved his success. He'll enjoy sharing his success story with you. He knows many of the answers to your landscaping questions. His yard has the same climate—and basically the same soil conditions—as yours. He knows which plants grow best in your neighborhood, which require help and when.

You want a minimum-care yard; Mr. Greenthumb will be able to tell you which of his ornamentals require the least upkeep. He'll be able to refer you to other sources—to a nurseryman, garden club member, or county agricultural agent. He probably belongs to a garden club or a horticulture society and participates in their garden clinics and tours. Possibly he gets landscaping help from publications of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (See list, inside back cover.)

The how-to information contained in these publications comes from research conducted by specialists in the Agricultural Research Service and in land grant colleges and experiment stations. These specialists have spent decades developing lawn grasses, plants, trees, and shrubs—and the know-how for their planting and care—that you can use to produce natural beauty around your home.

USDA specialists advise beginning home landscape artists to make a rough but detailed plan on paper. Position your house, its walks and driveway, existing plants, trees, and shrubs. Be sure to note problem areas—embankments, areas that need screening, areas of heavy traffic. Indicate the direction your house faces, which areas are heavily shaded, which have partial or full sun.

Next, look through all of the landscaping and gardening publications you can get your hands on. Look for solutions to your specific yard problems—a ground cover for a steep bank, grass and shrubs that will grow in shady areas, flowers and trees that thrive under direct sun.

Study these publications also for ideas on foundation plantings, on patios for outdoor living, attractive fencing. And be sure to observe plantings as you drive around

*Poinsettias by any other color are just as beautiful. Mrs. Martie Beale is surrounded by the beauty of some new varieties of poinsettias developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Center.*



your neighborhood. Stop and ask the names of the trees, shrubs, or plants you especially like. You will gather a wealth of ideas—and friends.

Perhaps at this point, you should make two decisions: how much you want to spend and over what period of time. For best results, don't try to crowd your home landscaping project into one or two years. Make it a five-year plan. Your pocketbook—and your back—will appreciate it.

The success of your landscaping depends upon how carefully you develop your plan and how well you select and maintain the plants and other materials that go into your landscape. Specialists at USDA's National Arboretum, Washington, D.C., say to use restraint in landscaping. It is better, they say, for you to use too few plants than too many.

Three "don'ts" in choosing your foundation plantings: (1) Don't use tall-growing shrubs in front of windows; (2) don't use the same species of shrubs in a straight row; (3) don't include tall trees. Your corner plantings should not exceed half the height of your house from the ground to the eaves. And your entrance shrubs should be low-growing, perhaps dwarf Japanese yew, sargent juniper, or azaleas.

Of course, your landscape will not be complete without flowers—both annuals and perennials. (Much useful information on flower planting is available in the USDA booklet G-91, "Growing Flowering Annuals," and G-114, "Growing Flowering Perennials.") Annual flowers can provide a mass of color for brightening the dark foliage of background shrubs, to fill in beds until shrubs grow large enough to be decorative in their own right, or to overplant bulb beds. (Annuals will provide color after spring flowering bulbs have passed.)

#### **ROSES FOR THE HOME**

Roses are probably the most popular of all garden flowers. They can be grown in every part of the country and are adapted to many decorative purposes.

##### ***For success in growing garden roses—***

- Buy vigorous plants from a reputable local nursery, retail store, or mail-order nursery.
- Select a planting site that receives at least 6 hours of sunshine daily.
- Set plants in well-prepared beds.
- Water them frequently.
- Cut flowers from the plant without damaging the remaining parts of the plant.
- Prune the plants every year.
- Spray or dust regularly to prevent insect or disease damage.
- Protect the plants from winter injury.

—G25, "Roses for the Home"

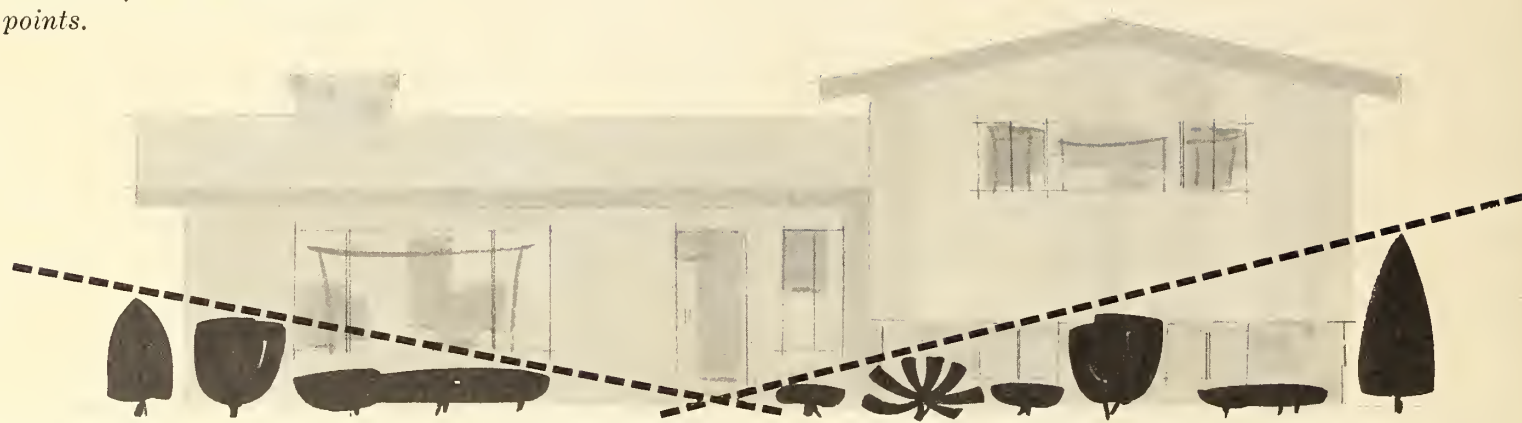


*Properly selected and planted flowers and trees (left) can make the approach to any home a beautiful way of saying welcome. (right) Bradford ornamental pear trees line the streets of this neighborhood in University Park, Maryland, where USDA made a test planting of more than 200 trees in 1954. Seeds of the Bradford pear, a native of China, were brought into this country in 1916 by a USDA plant explorer.*



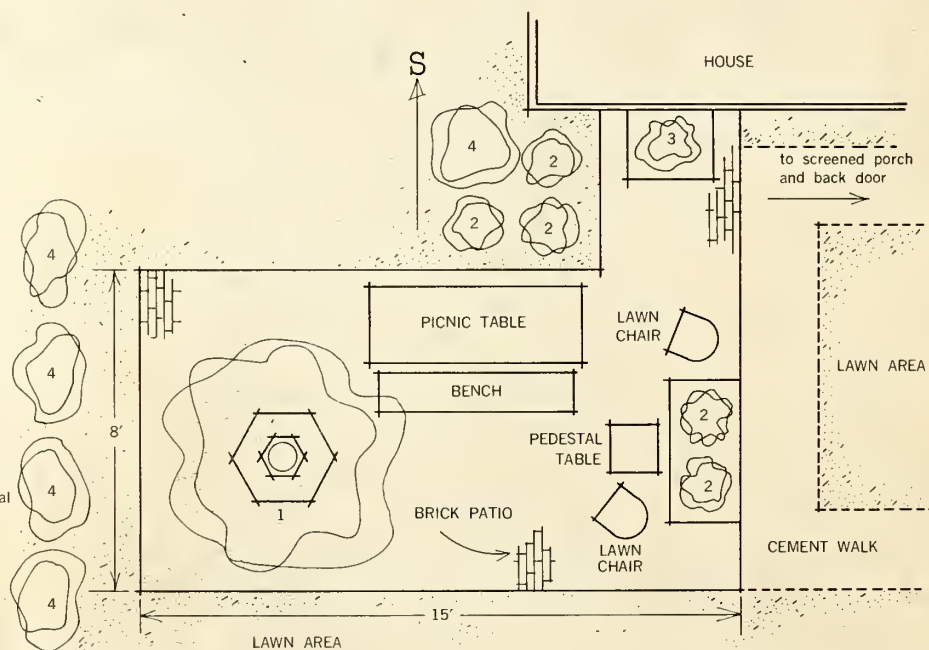


Here's a simple guide to designing your foundation planting: Take a snapshot of the front of your house—or sketch it. Then draw a V on the illustration as shown above. Angle the V from the center of your entrance to a midpoint between the eaves and the ground at each corner. Your foundation shrubs and other plants should, at maturity, fall within these lines. Remember, don't overcrowd your planting. And for variety, allow the lawn to run up to the base of the house at various points.



This small patio, built around a dogwood tree, offers enjoyable outdoor living from spring to fall. Plantings around the patio provide colorful blooms and foliage throughout the picnic season. Built of used brick laid on 2 inches of sand, the patio has two planters—one for azaleas and one for a rose bush (see diagram).

1. Dogwood tree with redwood hexagonal bench built around the base
2. Azalea
3. Rose
4. Weigela (screen)







*Close up of crabapple blossoms (above) in the National Arboretum. (below) A perfect white camellia is a beautiful object for scientific or any other kind of study.*

#### **EXPLORING FOR PLANTS**

Plant explorers are called the "glamour workers" of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. They search the world for crop-producing plants and beauty-producing flowers and ornamentals that can be grown in the United States. Explorations completed in 1966 in India and Sikkim provided 228 new ornamentals for testing. If successful, they will be developed and offered to nurseries for propagation and sale. The beautiful Bradford Pear, an ornamental shade tree now available from most nurseries in the United States, was introduced from China nearly 50 years ago.





Flowering perennials are excellent as edging plants, for accents in an evergreen planting, and to give colorful, temporary covering to a large area.

For a small yard, consider the ultimate height and spread of new plants. Try to keep them to scale. If you live in a small one-story house on a small lot, you wouldn't plant a tree that grows to 120 feet. It would dwarf your house. Instead, you would plant a tree that makes your house appear larger.

You might choose a flowering crabapple—or the Bradford pear, an ornamental that was selected from a species introduced from China by USDA plant explorers. Watch for new and improved species of plants. USDA plant explorers and plant breeders are steadily improving our list of ornamentals. The Bradford pear is one example. Others are Glenn Dale azaleas, long-flowering and disease-resistant viburnums, grasses that stay green through scorching hot summers, privet that will withstand bitter northern winters.

When selecting these newer ornamentals, pick the right plants for your climate. Hardiness zone maps of the United States are often found in nursery catalogs. Pick only those plants, trees, or shrubs that are recommended for your zone. Most nurseries sell plants tagged by hardiness zones.



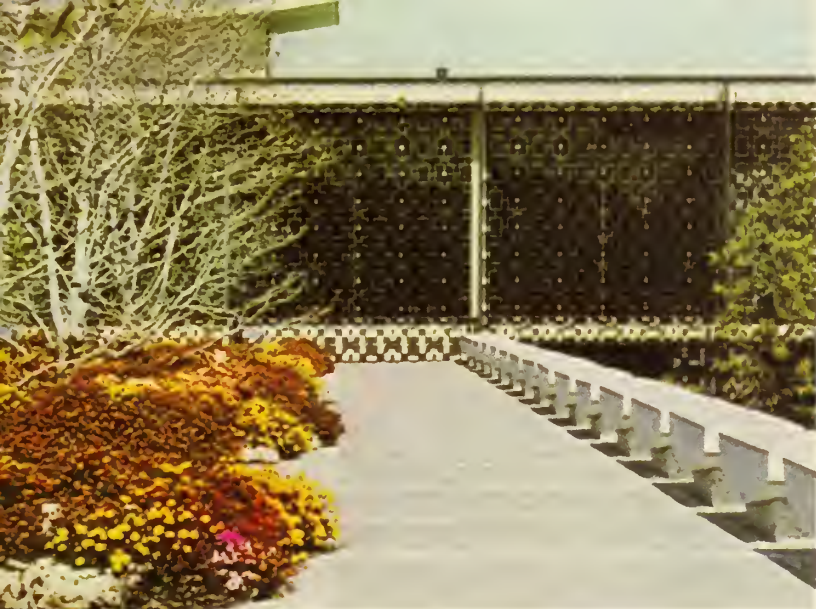
Many home and community gardening enthusiasts use the National Arboretum's plant hardiness zone map (Miscellaneous Publication No. 814) to help them choose the best ornamental plants for a particular area and setting. Visitors to the Arboretum can see demonstration plantings of street trees, crabapples, lilies, magnolias, camellias, dogwoods, boxwoods, and many other groups of ornamentals. The Arboretum is perhaps best known for its azaleas—more than 70,000 plants displayed in appropriate settings.

Once you've decided which ornamentals are best for your yard—and this is a major step—you may buy only the basic plantings and later start other plants of the species from cuttings. Simple, how-to instructions are contained in several USDA publications—for example, G-80, "Home Propagation of Ornamental Trees and Shrubs."

This phase of your home beautification program could become a lifetime hobby, one that will lessen your landscaping costs considerably. It could be the start of a neighborhood beautification project—when a neighbor notices that *you* are Mr. (or Miss or Mrs.) Greenthumb.

Beautification is contagious.





*A USDA employee took this photograph (opposite page) of glowing white dogwood just outside the door of his home.  
(above) An approach to the National Arboretum Building.  
(below) A view of the grounds of the National Arboretum.*

#### **GROWING AZALEAS AND RHODODENDRONS**

Azaleas and rhododendrons are at their best in climates that are fairly mild and humid. Some varieties grow well throughout the Appalachian Mountains; others in the States along the Atlantic and gulf coasts. Still others do well around Lake Erie, in the southern Mississippi Valley, and along the Pacific coast from Puget Sound to San Francisco Bay.

Soils or climate in the rest of the United States may be unfavorable for azaleas. Azaleas can be grown in unfavorable regions, but they need more attention than in favorable regions.

You can grow azaleas successfully if you follow these rules in planting and caring for them.

- Buy species and varieties that are adapted to your area.
- Get plants that are at least 2 years old and 8 to 16 inches tall.
- Plant them in well-drained, acid soil that is high in organic-matter content.
- Set plants no deeper than they were in the nursery.
- Maintain a mulch around them during the growing season.
- Guard against drought; be sure plants get the equivalent of 1 inch of rainfall every 10 days.
- Protect azaleas from insect attack.

—G71, "Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons"









## YOUR COMMUNITY

People in the United States have traditionally joined with their neighbors to get things done. Barn-raising, cooperative harvesting, and volunteer fire companies are classic examples of community action. It usually begins when one neighbor wants to help another.

If you would like to make your community more beautiful, you can be sure that many others want the same. Only a little push—perhaps yours—is needed to start the ball rolling. Others will join you in your efforts. Or you may find that others are already at work and you can join them.

People working with State Cooperative Extension Services, using Federal Extension Service materials and guidance, have provided impetus and direction for many community beautification projects. Many of the Nation's 2¼ million 4-H Club youth are engaged in neighborhood and community cleanup and beautification. So are Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, the Future Farmers and Future Homemakers of America, Red Cross Youth, and other youth organizations.

In some communities the elderly have a special role. Project Green Thumb, sponsored by the National Farmers Union, employs older men in roadside and park clean-up and plantings.

Often the first step in community beautification is the elimination of ugliness—picking up litter, removing junked cars and trash heaps from public view, demolishing useless and unsightly structures, and making the ground ready for cover, trees, and flowers.

The second step is the beginning of the creation of beauty—restoring natural beauty where it has been mar-

*A group of 4-H girls (opposite page) painted 25 mailboxes on 5 miles of road from Daggett to Star Corners, Michigan, as their contribution to the Menominee County soil conservation district beautification program. The owner of this home, near Daggett, had already given the community a pleasant view.*



*Do you want an azalea that will bloom in winter? You can have azaleas that will bloom any time of the year, thanks to horticulturists who concern themselves with the mysteries of plants the year around.*

*The Homemakers Club of the Cooperative Extension Service in Clemson, South Carolina, created and maintain this spot of beauty.*



red, establishing natural beauty where none has existed. A large part of beautification consists of improving lawns, selecting, planting, and caring for trees, flowers, and ornamentals, conserving land and water, and improving ground cover—in short, of working harmoniously with nature.

Here is one way to get started:

Members of the Meadow Valley Extension Club in Washington County, Arkansas, met to discuss what they could do to improve the looks of things around them. "If you can't get people to pick up trash in their own front yards," one of them said, "there's not much hope for beauty."





*In many localities (top) youth have joined to make their school grounds more beautiful with proper plantings and ground cover. (bottom) As highway traffic becomes heavier, highway litter becomes heavier too. The 4-H Club members and their leaders who collected this pile of trash have helped to beautify their community by eliminating some ugliness. Throughout the Nation these efforts help, but litter prevention is the long-term answer.*





"We can write letters to our newspapers and complain to public officials," another said, "but we ought to do something."

What can a small group of women do to make their community beauty conscious? Members of the Meadow Valley Club decided to go out along the public highways and pick up the trash by hand. A photograph of these Extension club-women stooping to pick up roadside litter was published in the Fayetteville *Times*, "It surely did more to spur action for Arkansas beautification than several thousand words," an Extension leader reported.

The agriculture agent for Cape May County, New Jersey, started a drive to eliminate ugliness along the causeway from the Garden State Parkway to North Wildwood. Storms in the bay had deposited tons of junk along the North Wildwood boulevard—an eyesore made up of broken boats, old automobiles, oil drums, beer cans, piling, and other nondescript junk. "Let's clean it up," the county agent suggested.

The Cape May County *Gazette* repeated his suggestion with a full page of photographs and several editorials. Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, civic service groups, and many other citizens quickly responded. They cleaned up the causeway in short order and later planted Japanese black pine along the way. (Japanese black pine will grow almost anywhere—to a degree, they are even resistant to salt spray.)

Young people often lead the way in community beautification and they are easily encouraged. In Clemson, South Carolina, a movie theater manager encouraged Aiken County youngsters to pick up empty beer cans by offering a movie ticket in exchange for every 15 cans. Within 8 days the theater manager had 35,000 beer cans stacked around the box office. Most of the young collectors brought in more than 15 cans—they were so easy to find. Four boys brought in more than 1,000 each.

Boys and girls in the Burlington, Wisconsin, 4-H Explorer's Club transformed an abandoned house foundation and debris into a pretty wayside rest for travelers on Route 83. They graded, seeded, and landscaped the site, built a fireplace and a picnic table. When they completed their wayside, they tacked this sign on a tree: *This wayside was made by the 4-H Explorers, we hope you enjoy it. Not responsible for accidents.*

In Yakima County, Washington, 1,000 4-H Club members, supported by their leaders and parents, conducted a "4-H March on Garbage" and collected 200 truckloads of trash.

In El Indio, Maverick County, Texas, 4-H Club members put in 4 months of hard work cleaning land, plant-



*One way to make any back yard beautiful is to fill it with flowers. This azalea garden in a modest neighborhood is the pride of the community, a mecca for photographers.*





*Another vista on the grounds of the National Arboretum, a research facility and horticultural showplace of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service.*

ing grass, and adding plantings to the natural landscape to create a community park. Besides a high sense of personal accomplishment, their labor brought them a letter of commendation from the First Lady.

The Broome County 4-H Club in Binghamton, New York, is an example of 4-H working for natural beauty in a city. The club was inspired by another big city 4-H Club flower-growing effort—that of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A narrated slide program, “The Philadelphia Story,” set them on their way. They formed a Flower Corps.

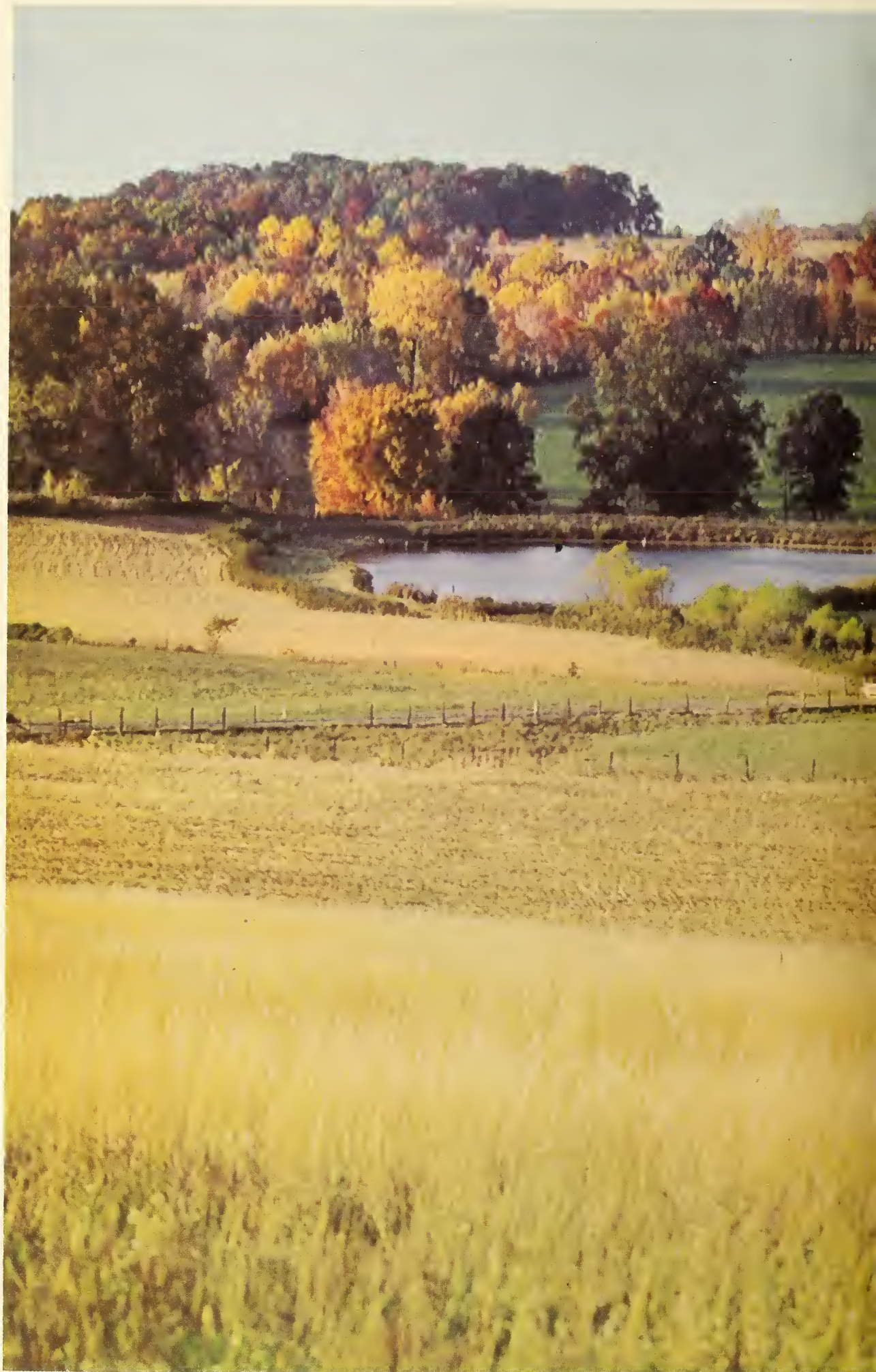
The Broome County Flower Corps went to work in the Carlisle Hill Apartments, a Binghamton Housing Authority development of 21 buildings. Families in 14 of the 21 buildings were represented at the first meeting, but enthusiasm really bloomed with the second meeting. A seed company representative gave a talk on seeds and donated 250 packets of assorted flower seeds. The gift made the vision of the Flower Corps seem real to the young planners. Their enthusiasm soared. “Many of these boys had never seen a seed,” their project leader reported.

More contributions of plants and seeds came from commercial greenhouses, garden clubs, and the Binghamton Kiwanis Club. After a half-dozen training meetings, 50 Flower Corpsmen met at Carlisle Hill prepared to show families how to plant gardens. Members of 76 families joined in the planting party. For some, it was a first experience—an experience that became more rewarding when the 76 gardens of Carlisle Hill burst into bloom.

Some beautification projects rapidly expand to encompass regions of many square miles. Northwestern Pennsylvania's highly successful SPARKS is an example. SPARKS stands for “Spring Pickup and Repair Keeps (Northwestern Pennsylvania) Sparkling.” SPARKS became much more than the traditional regional cleanup. It generated a warm spirit and new pride among many thousands of people. An Extension agent reported, “It's unclear whose idea it was originally, or who should get the credit, because things just seemed to jell and everybody got community-minded.” This is typical of the Cooperative Extension Service spirit—and the spirit of



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community beautification everywhere. The greater its success the less it can be attributed to a single group or organization.

SPARKS brought about the restoration of several community squares, the refurbishment of monuments, parks, store fronts, public buildings, and the landscaping of fire halls, schools, wayside picnic areas, highway intersections, and fairgrounds. Two groups of youngsters rebuilt and painted mailboxes along country roads; adult groups worked at giving approaches to towns a pleasant and welcoming appearance; one contingent, with the help of the fire department, concentrated on burning junk buildings.

You may be the spark in your community.

#### **A NOTE ON URBAN PLANNING**

You can do a great deal toward improving the beauty of your community no matter where you live. But by far the best time to begin is before the community has been built. The undeveloped land that remains around urban centers in the United States is all the land there is—now and forevermore.

After houses, roads, schools, and shopping centers have been built, the terrain can be altered only at great expense. Acres of cement and miles of underground wiring and piping cannot be easily improved, even though it becomes apparent that costly mistakes have been made, that natural beauty, and the land itself, is being lost. New houses can be seriously damaged—and values may decline drastically—if they are located without regard to drainage and the proper conservation of land and water.

Land and water are the basis for community beauty. To make the best use of land, long-range broadscale planning is necessary.

Reston, Virginia, is one example of thorough planning for beauty and the best use of land. With technical assistance from USDA's Soil Conservation Service, Reston's developers built a 35-acre lake as a focal point for the town's business and residential area, then went on to establish a number of other long-range conservation measures which also contribute to the lasting beauty of the community. They built a nursery to save thousands of plants that would otherwise have been destroyed during construction; they planted some 30,000 tree seedlings on eroded farmland, and they provided for nature centers and improved wildlife habitat by planting special food and cover plants.

The USDA has served other suburban developments in a variety of ways, commonly in soil survey interpreta-

*Among the first steps in building the most advanced types of suburban communities or "satellite cities" is consultation with USDA conservation experts. The best use of land and water determines the pattern of living for tomorrow. The Forest Service is consulted too, for the cities of tomorrow—if planned wisely today—will not be barren of trees.*







tion. The Long Grove Country Club Estates in Lake County, Illinois, has used the USDA Soil Conservation Service. The builders of Columbia, a new city in Howard County, Maryland, using the most advanced planning, have consulted with the USDA's conservation experts. So has New Jersey's Rutgers University in building its new golf course.

Soil conservation techniques developed by USDA are also in use at Tysons Corner International Shopping Center in Fairfax County, Virginia. The developers of

this 86-acre site had a conservation plan in hand before they applied for a grading permit.

Land that has been gullied and marred can be redeemed and beautified—but at considerable expense. Although much ugliness can be eliminated and some ugliness can be screened from public view, lasting natural beauty cannot be erected like a facade. It depends, in most instances, upon conservation measures that are invisible to most people. The beauty that is saved and the beauty that results is much more easily seen.

*A country lane (right) made ugly by a dump. A Tennessee Cooperative Extension Service and civic groups rallied youth and other citizens to help clean it up. (below) Farmers in the Houston County soil conservation district planted slash pine along 4 miles of U.S. 84 near Dothan, Alabama. The trees were planted four rows deep on their own property beyond the highway right-of-way. (Pensacola bahiagrass was planted on the right-of-way for erosion control.) One farmer planted Paul Scarlet roses at every other fencepost.*





## TREE PLANTING

The key to good tree planting is to select the right species and be generous. Be generous in digging a planting hole, in replacing poor soil with good, in expending energy to do the job right.

The right way to do the job depends on how good the soil is on the planting site:

### *In good soil—*

- Dig planting holes for bare-root trees large enough to receive the roots when they are spread in a natural position.
- Dig planting holes for balled-and-burlapped trees 2 feet wider than the rootball.
- Dig holes deep enough so you can set the trees at the same level at which they grew in the nursery.

### *In poor soil—*

- Dig holes for all trees as wide and deep as you can conveniently make them.
- Replace the poor soil from the hole with good soil when you fill in around the newly set tree.

### *In soil with poor drainage—*

- Limit tree selection to species having a mature height of 35 to 50 feet.
- Set the rootball in a shallow depression in the soil.
- Fill in around the rootball with good soil, forming a slightly concave bed extending out as far from the trunk as you can manage.

Pack soil under the newly set tree until it sets at the level at which it grew in the nursery.

Before filling around the rootball, stake or guy the tree. If the trunk diameter of the tree is 3 inches or less, use one or two 6-foot poles or steel fenceposts to stake the tree. Set the poles vertically into the soil next to the rootball. Fasten the trunk to the poles with a loop of wire that is enclosed in a section of garden hose to prevent bark cutting.

If the tree trunk is larger than 3 inches in diameter, support it with three guy wires. Loop the hose-covered wires around the trunk about half way up the main stem or trunk. Stake one guy wire to the ground in the direction of the prevailing wind. Stake the other two wires to the ground to form an equilateral triangle.

After the tree is set and the hole is filled with good soil, settle the soil around the roots by watering thoroughly. Then wrap the trunk with burlap or creped kraft paper to prevent sunscald. Start wrapping at the top and wrap toward the ground. Tie the wrapping material with stout cord, knotting it about every 18 inches. Remove the wrapping after 2 years—or when it drops off.

—G117, "Trees for Shade and Beauty"







## YOUR COUNTRYSIDE

Every United States citizen is a part-owner of millions of acres of land. Few of us realize how rich we are. The 50 States contain some 2.3 billion acres, of which one-third—a vast territory—is federally owned.

A large part of this publicly owned land is occupied by highways, streets, roads, Government buildings, military installations, public institutions, airfields, and so on. But a much larger part is open area in the form of municipal, State and National Forests, Parks, and Grasslands, protected reservations, wilderness areas, and other publicly owned territories.

USDA's Forest Service carries on three major activities, all of which contribute to natural beauty: (1) The management of 186 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands, (2) cooperative work with State and private owners of 380 million acres of forest land, and (3) forestry research. In each of these activities every citizen has a stake and can work to preserve and enlarge it—for himself and for posterity.

Beauty and use are old and familiar goals to foresters. One of their biggest and most difficult jobs is protecting the forests. An unquenched campfire, an unbroken match, or a carelessly tossed lighted cigarette—all deeds of men—can start a forest fire. But so can lightning, an act of Nature.

Forests and their natural beauty have other natural enemies: insects and disease can be as devastating as

*A view (opposite page) from Owl's Head Mountain, Vermont, shows the glory of a New England countryside in the fall when the sugar maple, red maple, birch, beech, and oak trees put on a color spectacular. In different ways, the countryside can be this lovely almost anywhere.*





*The Forest Service encourages State highway departments to beautify the countryside by roadside tree planting, and this has been done in many States through their own forestry services. Highway beautification is one of the major challenges of the last third of the 20th century; some highways are indeed beautiful in marked contrast to the many which are not.*

fire; animals, wind, and floods also cause great damage. Protection is a never-ending job.

Our National Forests are evidence that natural beauty doesn't "just happen." U. S. forests are in far better condition than they were 50 years ago, or even 20 years ago. Without care and protection, a forest will degenerate. Proper forest care requires the combined skills of the landscape architect, soil scientist, geneticist, engineer, botanist, nursery technician, and other highly trained specialists. Public forest lands require also the care and protection of all who use them.

The scenic landscape that most of us see most often is that of farm or range lands near our homes. This land is privately owned; its maintenance and beauty depend primarily upon the individual landowner.

Most of USDA's program of financial assistance for conservation and beautification of the land require the participation of private landowners. The oldest of such programs is the Agricultural Conservation Program, administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Con-





*A group of young riders along the Crow Wing River Saddle Trail pause at a canoe landing. The idea for the saddle trail, a companion to the Crow Wing River Canoe Trail, originated through the efforts of the Wadena County Resource Conservation and Development Committee.*



*American beachgrass is strangely beautiful—and utterly practical (opposite page). This 1965 planting by the Worcester County soil conservation district near Ocean City, Maryland, was made possible through years of study and development by USDA scientists. A “trainer dune” was formed from hydraulic fill and subsequently built up to a 17-foot elevation by sand fences and plantings of American beachgrass. The grass preserves shore which the ocean would otherwise relentlessly claim.*



servation Service through farmer-elected committeemen in each county and community, in effect since 1936. Under such programs, trees have been planted on more than 6 million acres, some 2 million farm ponds have been built, and permanent meadow, pasture, or range established or improved on 300 million acres.

These conservation measures, which represent large investments for the landowners, help to keep the landscape green and beautiful and water pure for every person in the region. Under the Cropland Adjustment Program, farmers can receive up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing on unneeded cropland approved conservation measures, such as grass, trees, water storage ponds, and better cover for wildlife. Directly or indirectly, these measures benefit everyone.

More than 2 million acres of cropland were diverted to other uses through participation in the Cropland Adjustment Program in 1966. The owners of 36,300 farms signed 5- to 10-year agreements to devote land to conservation uses and keep it out of crop production. Nearly two-thirds of the agreements allowed for public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, or hiking.

A part of the Cropland Adjustment Program called Greenspan enables State, county, and municipal governments to do much the same. Such a public group can get help to buy cropland approved as suitable for taking out of production and, like the farmer, earn a share of the cost of conservation measures which will provide more green space for public use.

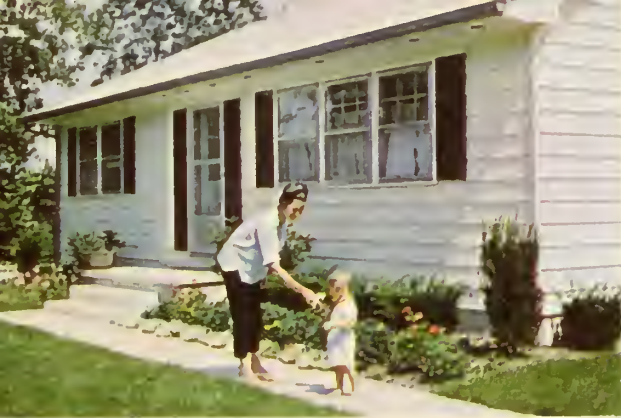
Greenspan assistance has gone to towns, cities, counties, State departments of conservation, county conservation boards, and school districts in Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. Greenspan is primarily a crop adjustment measure, but it serves both city and countryside. While providing more open space for public use, it enables an urban community to maintain and improve the natural beauty.

Much of the USDA's work for natural beauty is in the form of technical assistance to people, governmental units, and organizations. Technical assistance, as such, is not often exciting or beautiful. The results often are. USDA's Soil Conservation Service channels most of its technical assistance through soil conservation districts, which are the central source of help and information about water and soil conservation in every region in the



*Kay McNeal, Kathy Weber, and Ruth Hubbard are admiring crownvetch in bloom along the roadside near their home in Michigan. Crownvetch, developed by USDA as a healing cover for raw subsoil, is a pink-flowered legume that controls erosion and adds to the beauty of roadsides from Maine to Colorado and from southern California to Oklahoma.*





*Not the least of a pretty countryside is a pretty new home, such as this one made possible by a Farmers Home Administration loan.*



*One of the major contributions to the beauty of the countryside by USDA's Rural Electric Administration cannot be seen because it goes underground. The utility lines for the community shown in this photograph ends with a pole at the far right. All of the electric and telephone wire and cable serving homes are buried out of sight. The top of a service pedestal shows in the center of the photograph.*





*In this idyllic campsite, which many believe is countryside beauty at its best, a group of 17 Future Farmers of America began a 3-day canoe trip on Crow Wing River. The location is 3 miles south of Huntersville, Minnesota.*



United States. Soil conservation districts are units or agencies of State governments created to administer soil and water conservation work.

Small watershed projects, for which the USDA provides technical assistance, cost-sharing, and credit, are sponsored by local soil conservation districts. Applications for assistance in small watershed installations usually include plans for beautification of the area.

Every citizen who takes an interest in the beauty of his surroundings can help—perhaps more than he knows. Sometimes the protest of a single resident will bring about important changes for the better.

In one instance on record, county officials proposed to remove trees and shrubs from the banks of a pleasant little stream and convert it into a shallow 20-foot wide ditch to accommodate heavier runoff of water caused by changes of land use upstream. One resident through whose property the stream passed politely but firmly expressed her objections. Her neighbors joined her in asking the county soil conservation district to offer another plan that would meet drainage needs but still be attractive. They did so, and the county officials followed their advice to keep the creek 10 feet wide and stabilize its banks with concrete rubble. The stream is today more beautiful than ever before; it provides the necessary drainage—and the plan that preserved natural beauty cost the county less money.

USDA's Farmers Home Administration is well known for its loans to qualified farm home builders—and pretty, well-kept farm homes do improve country vistas. The FHA also provides loans and technical assistance to farmers and rural communities for the development of outdoor recreational facilities. These loans may be used to finance picnic areas, parks, campsites, golf courses, ski slopes, forest trails, hunting areas, and access roads to connect recreation areas with public roadways.

The Rural Electrification Administration also works effectively with its borrowers to improve the appearance of rural areas they serve. Most important is REA's program to develop and promote low-cost underground installation of telephone and electric lines to replace the clutter of pole lines across the countryside. Eighty-five percent of all REA-financed telephone lines built last year were buried out of sight. The first costs for electric lines are high, but they are getting lower. As the demand for underground installation increases, costs will become competitive with those for overhead installation. Underground installation of all utility lines would greatly improve the appearance of many rural and urban areas.



*Beauty and use have long been the twin goals of the USDA Forest Service. The proper use of forests pays dividends that can be counted, but those of beauty, depicted here, are priceless.*



While it is possible to argue convincingly that natural beauty is of value in itself and nothing more should be asked of it, it is nonetheless a fact that beauty is an economic asset. A house with a good lawn, landscaping, and shade trees is worth more than one lacking these features. Property values go up as neighborhoods grow in beauty.

Many persons have higher incomes because the natural beauty of regions where they work has been preserved and improved. Vacationers come; many choose to come again, some to buy and build. Land values rise and new businesses thrive, providing jobs where there were none before.

The famous Dogwood Drive in Sharp County, Arkansas, began when a group of people decided that theirs was an area of exceptional beauty which could profitably be shared with others. Many beautiful dogwoods were already there; many others have since been planted and more are added every year. Their blooming is a spring sight that people travel hundreds of miles to enjoy. Such beauty has no price and possibly would be desirable at any cost, but because it is cherished in Sharp County business has improved.

Another successful recreational development that depends largely upon natural beauty is the Crow Wing River Canoe Trail and companion Saddle Trail in Wadena County, Minnesota. A group there organized to provide camping sites for canoeists, hikers, and horseback riders and to maintain and improve Nature's beauty along Crow Wing River. Neighborhood Youth Corps under the Economic Opportunity Program provided much of the labor under the direction of the State Conservation Department. A part of a Resource Conservation and Development project which, like some 25 others in the Nation, is using financial and technical assistance administered by the USDA, the Crow Wing River project is an aesthetic and economic success. Of course it is a recreational success as well, offering healthy exercise and happy experiences to thousands.

Similar plans to enhance natural beauty while improving the economy can be carried out by the people in any region with beautiful natural resources. To start, all they need is the will—and the leadership, which can come from almost anyone with vision.



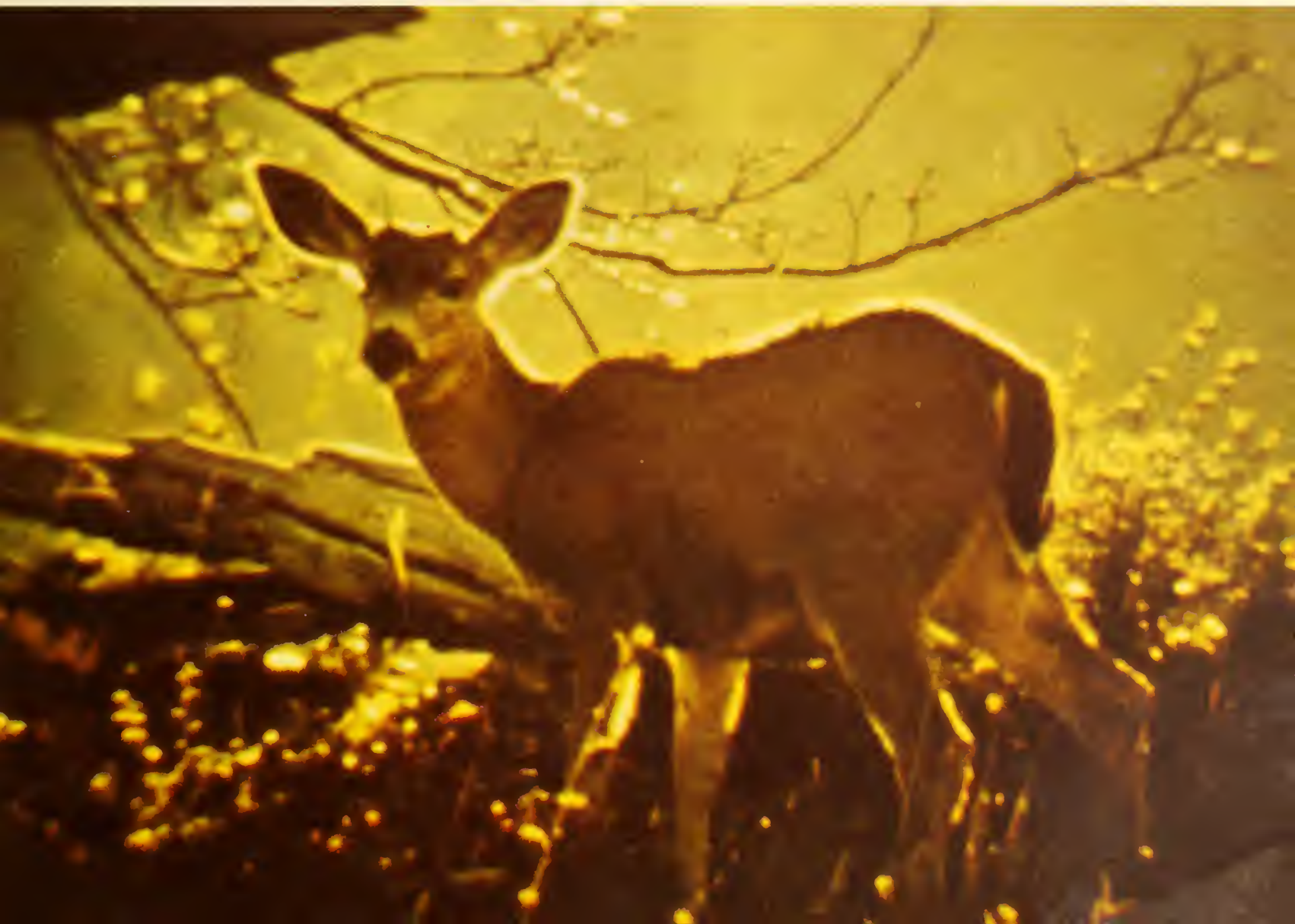
### What you can do!

- Plant a tree on Arbor Day
- Keep lawn mowed
- Burn trash
- Mow and trim around all buildings
- Plant new lawn
- Landscape home
- Tear down old buildings
- Dispose of accumulated junk (cars, too)
- Repair fences
- Clean out fence rows
- Plant barren banks in front of homes
- Remove old machinery
- Repair mail box

### What your organization can do!

- Clean up roadside
- Improve appearance of public buildings
- Clean up old cemeteries
- Replant barren banks and fields
- Paint mail boxes
- Establish roadside park
- Construct roadside park
- Improve road signs (entrance to town)
- Organize community cleanup
- Organize junk collection
- Clean up community playgrounds
- Sponsor a work day
- Plant trees on Arbor Day

*Is beauty safe?*





### For Additional Information and Assistance:

- The Cooperative Extension Service is a partnership in which the Federal Extension Service works with the State and county Extension services to provide educational assistance and advice in many fields, including conservation, outdoor recreation, and beautification. These educational and advisory services are available to individuals, groups, or communities. See your local county Extension agent or write the director of the Cooperative State Extension Service at your State land-grant university for information.

- USDA Soil Conservation Service gives technical assistance in soil and water conservation to landowners and operators in soil conservation districts. It provides technical assistance in the development of land use and conservation programs of community scope. Its services are available to any resident of a soil conservation district (nearly 3,000 in the Nation), and through local sponsors of watershed protection and flood prevention projects and Resource Conservation and Development projects. Apply at the nearest office of the Soil Conservation Service or your soil conservation district.

Kinds of assistance and how it can be used:

1. Information on various recreation enterprises for which the land is suited and on the conservation measures needed for each use.
2. Information on soils and their suitability for growing trees, shrubs, and grass; for road and trail construction; for building sites for recreation facilities; for septic tank filter fields; and for dams to impound water.
3. Physical suitability of sites for nature and hiking or riding trails, camping and picnicking, skiing, and other winter sports, firebreaks and access lanes, ponds, small lakes, wells, wildlife habitat, parking areas, playgrounds, and shooting preserves.
4. Information on plants and their suitability for protective cover on playgrounds, fields, roadsides, dams, and wildlife food and cover.
5. Developing, improving, and managing range and pasture for livestock and big game; farm woodlands for wildlife, hiking, and camping; water supplies; and fish and wildlife habitat.
6. Information on conservation measures and plants that can be used to heal eroded areas.



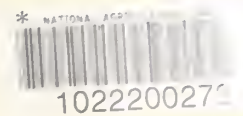
- Rural communities of not more than 5,550 population may qualify for loans from the Farmers Home Administration, provided their credit needs cannot be met by other sources at reasonable rates and terms. The loans may be used to finance a variety of community-type recreational facilities, such as picnic areas, parks, campgrounds, golf courses, ski slopes, target ranges, forest trails, hunting areas, swimming pools, access roads, and parking areas. The FHA has offices in most county seat towns.

- Through the State-Federal Cooperative Forest Management Program the State Forester provides technical help and advice on forest care to private forest owners, to municipal, county, or State governments, and to public and private corporations. Write directly to your State Forester, or to the Forest Service, Information and Education, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

- For information about Greenspan assistance in the purchase of cropland for community use, call your county office of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

- For specific "how-to" information on selection, planting, and care of flowers, shrubs, and trees, write to the Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.





### Beautification Begins at Home

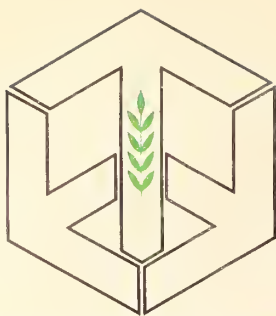
You can help to assure America's beautification by making your own property attractive and keeping it that way. The following publications contain information that may be useful to you in beautification and maintenance of your home grounds. The publications are available, at the indicated price, from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Please include your ZIP Code when ordering.

	Title	Price
G25	Roses for the Home-----	\$0.15
G51	Better Lawns -----	.15
G53	Lawn Insects: How To Control Them-----	.15
G61	Lawn Diseases -----	.15
G65	Growing Chrysanthemums in the Home Garden-----	.05
G66	Growing Iris in the Home Garden-----	.05
G71	Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons-----	.05
G76	Growing Ornamental Bamboo-----	.05
G79	Controlling Lawn Weeds With Herbicides-----	.10
G80	Home Propagation of Ornamental Trees and Shrubs---	.10
G81	Maple Diseases and Their Control-----	.05
G83	Pruning Shade Trees and Repairing Their Injuries----	.10
G86	Growing Camellias -----	.10
G88	Growing the Flowering Dogwood-----	.05
G89	Selecting Fertilizers for Lawns and Gardens-----	.05
G91	Growing Flowering Annuals-----	.10
G95	Reducing Salt Injury to Ornamental Shrubs in the West	.10
G102	Iron Deficiency in Plants: How To Control It in Yards and Gardens -----	.15
G104	Protecting Shade Trees During Home Construction-----	.05
L439	Spring-Flowering Bulbs -----	.05
AB237	Controlling Insects on Flowers-----	.40
AIB244	Soil Conservation at Home-----	.20
MP814	Plant Hardiness Zone Map-----	.20

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